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We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled SOME CONTEMPORARY JEWISH ATTITUDES TO JESUS, submitted by John Ralph Marshall, B. A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

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SOME CONTEMPORARY JEWISH ATTITUDES
TO JESUS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY COUNCIL
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INTRODUCTION

Schweitzer once wrote a now-famous work entitled The Quest of the Historical Jesus. The Jesus of history, as distinguished from the Christ of faith, is the object of a still continuing quest. The devotion and thought of Paul and of the Church through the ages, while shedding light upon Jesus, has at the same time obscured the original portrait. Though Jesus has been the subject of some sixty thousand volumes in eight hundred languages and dialects yet still the search continues, and must continue, to discover the "real" Jesus.

A short time ago the writer had the opportunity to read a life of Jesus by the Jewish scholar, Joseph Klausner. In Jesus of Nazareth the great personality of the gospel story came alive for me as he had not previously in Christian writings about him. Klausner accomplished what is the aim of every novelist that his hero should become real and alive to the reader.

It was but a step to begin to ask, What do the Jews think of Jesus today? Is he the Messiah? If not, why not? Why was Jesus, a Jew, rejected by first century Jewish society? With such questions in mind the writer began a task of research into the literature of some of today's foremost Jewish thinkers upon the problem of Jesus.

Of necessity the estimate of Jesus that is given in this paper is neither the point of view of the writer, nor of Christian scholarship, but rather, of the Jew. The aim is to be informative rather than apologetic. Criticism of the Jewish position is only a secondary purpose.

Finally, in the early stages of gathering information I was surprised to discover one fact and that is, we of the Christian Church, even those of considerable erudition, are largely ignorant of the rites, practices, and thinking of Judaism and of the Jews, and even of their outlook upon the object of our faith, Christ Jesus. Not only is such lack of knowledge and understanding the fertile soil upon which anti-Semitism takes root and grows but this ignorance constitutes a peculiar blind spot in modern New Testament scholarship which remains virtually oblivious of those from whom the Master came, to whom he preached, and among whom he died. The Jews would speak. Their words are often inaccurate, frequently offensive. Even so, the Church must listen for we have not yet discovered the real Jesus.

CHAPTER I
JUDAISM AND JESUS

1. THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM

Jesus was no problem for the Jews until recent times. To discover the reason for this fact requires a glance at Jewish history. The writer is indebted in the following discussion to works by Jocz¹ and Steinberg.²

During the Middle Ages the Jews lived in ghettos. Ultimately the difficulties of their condition caused an intellectual decline. Their Talmud was censored and prohibited, their books were burned, and repeatedly they were expelled. After the fifteenth century which was marked by the Jewish expulsion from Spain, their learning, which had contributed so much to the rise of the Reformation awakening, rapidly sank into insignificance. The Jew became accustomed to the ghetto. As well as living in the ghetto physically he lived there psychologically. "The answer to the outward ghetto was the willed, conscious inward Ghetto."³ The Jews kept to themselves. Discussion with non-Jews about Jesus was only very reluctantly entered upon and was frequently followed with new hardships for the unbelievers.

In the eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment a new era dawned for world Jewry. The "natural rights" of Locke and Rousseau laid the basis for modern life and for the emancipation of the Jews. Beginning with the granting of political rights in 1791 in France, Jewish emancipation developed throughout the nineteenth century reaching its completion in 1917 Russia.

1. Jacob Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ, A Study in the Controversy between Church and Synagogue, (S.P.C.K., London, 1949 and 1954), IV.

2. Milton Steinberg, Basic Judaism, (Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York, 1947).

3. Jocz, *op. cit.*, 22.

With emancipation came several by-products: anti-semitism, adoption of European culture, conversions to Christianity, birth of the Reform movement, and the beginning of Zionism. Anti-semitism, a phenomenon which at first had official religious support, became a racial science under the German National Socialists.

The medieval ghetto was essentially a religious environment. Eighteenth century Europe was marked by a growing tide of rationalism and secularization. In such a society many Jews thought that only the adoption of Western culture, dress, language and customs, separated them from full legal equality. The Maskilim made it their object to Europeanize their people. Thus did the Jews surrender to European civilization.

Jewish emancipation brought an alarming drift to Christianity. What neither sword nor stake had accomplished was achieved by the Liberalism of the eighteenth century. Jewish apostasy had several causes. One was the strong social pressure. Another was the liberal tendency in the Christianity of the day that tended to make the distinctions separating Judaism and Christianity negligible. An important cause for the drift to Christianity was that both the Church and the Synagogue came to accept baptism as a sign of entrance into Western civilization. Powerful indeed were the influences that sought to proselytize Moses' children.

Judaism was forced to respond, to resist. In the cry of the Jews for self-preservation the Reform movement began. The reform or liberal movement stood for change in the liturgy and ceremonial practice of the age-old practices of the synagogue. The reformers thought that Judaism must either compromise with the spirit of the age or die. Such a compromise demanded an answer to the question of authority. The conservative group looked to tradition for their authority. The reform group, in common with the spirit of the day, held that reason was the primary

authority. The basic principle of the reformers was that Judaism is "...not a static but a growing religion, ever adaptable to the changing conditions of life."⁴

In Liberal Judaism the reform movement, especially as it developed in Great Britain and America, reached its final stage. It is marked by a strong rationalism, an over-emphasis upon ethical religion, and a non-national outlook. By the last is meant that it regards the dispersion as an essential pre-requisite of Jewish life. Liberal Jews regard themselves not as belonging to a nation in the ordinary sense but as "Germans of the Mosaic persuasion." Liberal Judaism aims at "separatism in religion with assimilation in all the other elements of the national life, political, social and cultural."⁵

The rise of European nationalism aroused similar ambitions among the Jews. European Jewry, leaving the weak ideals of assimilation and fleeing ever present anti-semitism, rallied to the Zionist cause--a national home for the Jews. This new nationalism differed from that of ancient Jewish nationalism:

in the past, nationalism sprang from the religious consciousness; at present, the religious consciousness springs from nationalism. In other words: in the past, the Jew knew himself primarily a member of the Synagogue, and therefore a member of his people: at present, he knows himself a member of his people, and therefore feels some obligation to be still a member of the Synagogue. This difference indicates the extent of secularization of Jewish life.⁶

This emancipation which brought the Jewish people into contact with European culture "led on the one hand to apostasy and assimilation, and on the other hand to secularization and nationalism."⁷ The reform

4. Ibid., 106.

5. Israel I. Mattuck, What are the Jews?, (London, 1939), 239, quoted in ibid., 107.

6. Ibid., 109.

7. Ibid., 109.

movement divided Judaism into two camps: orthodox and reform (liberal) Judaism. This schism which broke the unity of Jewish life expresses itself in the three categories of synagogues today: orthodox, conservative, and reform.

2. JUDAISM AND JESUS

The entry into European civilization demanded a Jewish attitude to Christianity and to Jesus. The decline in Judaism and the rationalism of our age brought about a spiritual vacuum which made the Jews susceptible to the gospel. Thus it was necessary for authoritative Jewish studies to be made in order to reduce the success of Christian missions. Beside this spiritual vacuum was the desire to find an historical place in Judaism for one of its sons who undeniably had had tremendous influence upon mankind. The Jesus problem was a continuation of the dialogue that had been going on between the Church and the Synagogue for centuries. During the long period of the Middle Ages the Church had virtually made it a monologue but with emancipation the Jew could now again speak without fear, a situation of benefit to both parties.

Orthodox Judaism and liberal Judaism have differing points of view about Jesus. Considering their differences in other matters this is not surprising. However upon the matter of Jesus they are largely in agreement. Both overstress the Jewishness of Jesus. The orthodox, however, view him as a Jew only at his best while the liberals see him always as a Jew and always at his best.⁸ Both treat the Synoptic text recklessly--who does not? Neither can accept Jesus as Messiah. Both

8. Ibid., 111.

reject his divinity. Most acknowledge him as a great teacher though teaching nothing new that cannot be found in his time or before. The orthodox generally assign the role of founder of Christianity to Jesus while "the liberals differentiate between Jesus and historic Christianity, assigning its foundation chiefly to Paul."⁹

The strict orthodox attitude to Jesus is "absolute negation."¹⁰ To them the historic attitude of the Synagogue is determinative for today. Therefore any sign of positive criticism such as Klausner's life of Jesus is regarded as a betrayal of Judaism. Judah David Eisenstein, the editor of the Hebrew Encyclopedia said:

Some Reform Rabbis, eager to flatter Christians, are wont to praise Jesus of Nazareth as a Prophet, and they commend His moral Law. But these do us more harm than even Christian missionaries....And still more are we injured by these Jewish writers who come out from their holes and begin to paint things falsely, and break out in praise of Jesus of Nazareth, as, for example, Dr. Joseph Klausner does in his book Jesus of Nazareth and His Law. He was the first among Jewish writers to compose a whole book in vindication of Christianity and to describe the life of Jesus and his "Law", and to establish him as a teacher of morals above all others. Ephraim Deinard in his book The Sword of the Lord and of Israel says that Klausner has given a scientific trend to his book that none may suspect death in it: "For this book is deadly poison to young Jews, and a sharp sword in the hands of our adversaries."¹⁰

This very strict regard for tradition is becoming less common. Orthodox Judaism generally views Jesus with "guarded appreciation."¹¹

Orthodox writers number among their ranks such men as Paul Goodman (The Synagogue and the Church, 1908), Gerald Friedlander (The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, 1911), and even Martin Buber, though his views place him in almost a special category.

9. Ibid., 111.

10. Judah David Eisenstein, Ozar Wikuhim, (1928), 20, quoted

11. Ibid., 112. in Ibid., 112.

It was liberal Judaism that initiated the Jesus controversy. Orthodox Judaism entered the fray only by way of reaction. The entrance of Jewish scholars into New Testament research has added little real knowledge. Historical criticism was already well established when they began to study Jesus. Their main contribution has been in the area of Rabbinical studies.

Liberal Judaism numbers among its writers upon Jesus such scholars as Claude G. Montefiore (1858-1938) (The Synoptic Gospels, 1909, and others), Kaufmann Kohler (1843-1926) (The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church, 1929), Israel Abrahams (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, 1917, 1924), and Joseph Klausner (1874-) (Jesus of Nazareth, 1925).

The liberal view of Jesus ranges from one of guarded appreciation of a great teacher to near veneration of him by Montefiore, though he still must remain only a man, not God.

Jocz¹² has^a useful resumé of Jewish scholarship upon Jesus. (1) There is a marked unanimity amongst Jewish scholars about certain historical problems: for instance, about Pharisaism and its relationship to Jesus and the anti-Jewish and pro-Roman bias of the gospels. (2) There is an over-emphasis upon Jesus' teaching. (3) There is a great emphasis upon Jesus' Jewishness which leads to a diminishing of his originality. (4) There is a desire to separate Jesus from Johannine and Pauline Christianity and thus from the Church. "It is an effort to recover Jesus from the entanglements of Christian doctrine in order to make him presentable to the Jewish mind." (5) There is a marked change in attitude to Jesus marked by a sincere appreciation of his teaching, character and influence. (6) There is an awareness of his profound significance for humanity, which expresses itself in a desire to correlate Jesus in one way or another to modern Jewish life."

12. Ibid., 144-145.

If any three books were to be singled out as the chief references for this thesis they would be Montefiore's Synoptic Gospels, Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth, and Jocz's The Jewish People and Jesus Christ. The first is written by a liberal Jew, the second by a conservative-liberal, and the third by a Christian Jew.

Claude G. Montefiore (1858-1938), Biblical scholar and philanthropist, was the first Jew to write a modern commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. He has written a formidable amount of literature upon Judaism and Christianity. His two-volume commentary is probably his most significant work.

Jocz calls Montefiore "the most outstanding scholar in liberal Judaism." He may be. Klausner summarily dismisses The Synoptic Gospels in but a paragraph, less even than that given to the far less important book by Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus. Montefiore is not always a cautious writer. In his sincere appreciation of Jesus his statements at times go out on a limb. At one point he envisages the possibility of an eventual rapprochement between a liberal Judaism and a further denatured Unitarianism--a possibility quite improbable and wholly tragic. I prefer the more restrained and generally convincing scholarship of Klausner. Nevertheless, Montefiore writes from a background of good scholarship, writes competently in what is a new field for Jewish scholars, and has shown himself capable of considerable independent insight, a rare virtue among Jewish writers on Jesus.

Joseph Klausner (1874-), professor of Modern Hebrew Language and Literature in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, has written the life of Jesus in the Jewish scholarship of this century. There is no other Jewish book on Jesus (Montefiore's book is on the gospels rather than on

Jesus) that approaches its sound, thorough scholarship, its concise style, and its even sense of truth. Klausner states his aim to be historical rather than religious, a worthy goal that he falls considerably short of reaching but that he comes nearer to than does any other Jewish authority on Jesus. Klausner's *Life of Jesus* was first written in modern Hebrew and then translated into English by Herbert Danby. It is noteworthy, as Danby states in a translator's preface, that "this is the first time such a work has been attempted in Hebrew with neither satiric nor apologetic bias."¹³ Klausner's cautious (guarded) appreciation of Jesus suggests that his position is that of the conservative synagogue or perhaps, between the conservative and the reformed.

Jacob Jocz is a writer about whom I have been able to find out very little. We know only that he has written another book, Is It Nothing To You (1941), that he lives in England, that he has a Ph.D., and that he is a Christian Jew. Jocz's formidable bibliography and immense number of footnotes are indicative of wide and competent scholarship. He depends too much on his sources and occasionally buttresses his argument by the use of quotations suitable to his purpose but not necessarily representative of Jewish scholarship. His book is more a compilation than an independent approach to the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. He has helpful insight for he is one who has sat at both tables. His critical analysis of Jewish works upon Jesus is a task that only he who knows both camps could do well.

It will be recognized that this thesis depends overmuch on the thinking of liberal Judaism. There are two reasons for this fact: firstly,

13. Herbert Danby, Translator's Preface, in Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching, (Macmillan Co., New York, 1925), 6.

it is liberal Judaism that has something sound to say about Jesus--orthodox Judaism is more often negative than informative, and secondly, Jewish books are not easily procured; the books of Goodman and Gerald Friedlander were just not available. It may well be that what is stated as the opinion of Judaism as a whole may at times be only the view of the reform synagogues and not the orthodox.

The writer has discovered that a complete study of Jewish attitudes to Jesus should include research into the subjects: Judaism, its theology and practices today, and Paul, the key figure in the initiation and development of the Church. It was possible to deal with these subjects only briefly in this paper.

CHAPTER II
ANCIENT SOURCES

It is necessary that a study of the life of Jesus should include a review of the written sources of his life. The primary sources are the canonical gospels. Other writings vary in worth: there is mere legend (Tol'doth Yeshu); there are brief but valuable references in the Latin writing of Josephus; and though historical evidence regarding Jesus is only a secondary purpose of his writing, Paul's letters are of high value because of their early date. We shall examine these documents, and others, for authorship, date, place of writing, situation in which written, and information about Jesus of Nazareth.

1. HEBREW

After the time of Ezra (c.400 B.C.) an oral tradition developed among the Jews. It is difficult to date with any precision such a beginning. Danby suggests the earlier half of the second century B.C. as the time for the commencement of four centuries of Jewish religious and cultural activity that was incorporated at the close of the second century A.D. as the Mishnah.¹ The Mishnah was the product of the Tannaim, rabbis of the first and second centuries of the Christian era who dominated the religious and cultural life of the Jews after the destruction of the Temple (70 A.D.). In reply to the common view that stresses the continuity of the development of Judaism in these first two centuries Danby has declared, perhaps too extremely, that: "...the Mishnah marks the passage to Judaism as definitively as the New Testament

1. H. Danby, The Mishnah, (Oxford University Press, London, 1933), xlii.

marks the passage to Christianity."² Since the Tannaim were in the Pharisaic tradition it has been suggested by W. D. Davies that "...we cannot, without extreme caution, use the Rabbinical sources as evidence for first-century Judaism."³

The Mishnah is a formidable volume (Danby's translation numbers some 800 pages) arranged under the topics seeds, festivals, women, injuries, holy things, and purifications. A glance in the festival section under the subsection "Sabbath" reveals 137 separate entries regulating in the minutest detail the living out of that day of rest. The entries are anonymous although frequently a rabbinical saying containing a different point of view is quoted along with the name of its author-rabbi.

From the beginning of the third century to the close of the fifth was the period of the Amoraim, the compilers of the Talmud. There were two Talmuds, the Palestinian or Jerusalem which was a product of the rabbinical activity centered at Tiberias, and the Babylonian which embodied the rabbinical thinking of Mesopotamia. "Talmud" in its broadest meaning can refer to the whole of Jewish literature. More strictly it refers to the later rabbinical writing, that is of the Amoraim, which was principally Mishna plus commentary. The commentary or Gemara was divided into Halakah, legal and religious portions considered to be definitive and binding, and Haggadah, popular legends, stories, and parables of a non-binding nature. It was seldom that one could find from the Talmud itself just which parts were Halakah.

2. Ibid., xlll.

3. W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,
(University Press, Cambridge, 1948), 3.

Although the Talmud was chiefly commentary in form it became an encyclopedia of Jewish faith and scholarship. It was literature based upon oral tradition yet it summarized the literature of an entire epoch (300 years). Later Judaism ascribed to the Talmud authority second only to that of the Jewish Bible.

Mention must be made of a form of literature that was expository or homiletic in nature known as Midrash or Midrashim. This too had both Halakhic and Haggadistic material. The Midrash was compiled about 700 A.D. not long after the Talmud had reached its close.⁴

It may be useful to draw together in a brief note the sources so far mentioned. From the Tannaim came the Mishnah, the Baraitas, and early Midrashim.⁵

References to Jesus in the Talmud are few. The few Talmudic stories about him deliberately attempt to contradict the events recorded in the gospels. In summarizing the value of the Talmud, Klausner declares that the Talmudic stories verify the existence of an historical Jesus and they make it unreasonable to doubt the general character of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels.⁶

Let us look at some of the references to Jesus in the Talmud. Since those coming from the work of the Amoraim are too late to be of any objective historical value we shall consider only those of the Tannaim.

Deriving from the conviction of Christians that Jesus was born without a natural father, a legend spread that Jesus was the fruit of

4. Abram S. Isaacs, What is Judaism? (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1912), 102.

5. Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching, (Macmillan Company, New York, 1925), 20.

6. Ibid., 20.

an illicit union between Miriam (Mary) and Pandera or Pantheras, a Roman soldier. The name Pandera was made common knowledge through the polemics of Celsus so that even Origen felt compelled to answer the legend by affirming that Joseph was called Panthera.

A passage in the Baraita (Tannaimic material not included in the Mishna) tells that Jesus was a worshipper of a brick.⁷ A second Baraita, of greater historical value, has the following to say:

"On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu (of Nazareth) and the herald went before him for forty days saying, '(Yeshu of Nazareth) is going to be stoned in that he hath practised sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel. Let everyone knowing aught in his defence come and plead for him.' But they found naught in his defence and hanged him on the eve of Passover."⁸

The passage is notable for its charge that Jesus was a sorcerer and for its confirmation of John's account that Jesus was executed on the eve of Passover. This Baraita is followed immediately after with another stating that Jesus had five disciples who were executed together.

Several references to one named Balaam occur. Though some have supposed the name was meant to refer to Jesus, Klausner argues that the evidence confirms that the names refer to different people.

An early Talmudic statement refers to Jesus as "such-an-one" and as illegitimate:

"R. Shimeon ben 'Azzai said: I found a genealogical roll in Jerusalem wherein was recorded, 'Such-an-One is a bastard of an adulteress.'"⁹

Most Talmudic material is of questionable historic value about Jesus. As Klausner has said, its real value is to be found in its disclosure of the attitude of the first generation of the Tannaim who lived after the destruction of the Temple. For these spiritual leaders Jesus was a true Jew who usually upheld the law but when at other times he set it aside

7. Ibid., 25.

8. Ibid., 27.

9. Ibid., 35.

their wrath was aroused against him. They accepted the truth of his miracles but attributed them to powers of sorcery. His birth was made illegitimate. Further, it was not until the end of the Tannaitic era, two hundred years after the crucifixion, that we find a Tanna accusing Jesus of "making himself God."¹⁰

A book that was popular in Jewish communities during the Middle Ages though infrequently read today was the Tol'doth Yeshu. The story is of a certain Yochanan, a pious man who is betrothed to a virgin, Miriam. Miriam, mistaking a handsome villain, Joseph Pandera, for her betrothed is betrayed by him. Yochanan, discovering the crime and unable to find evidence to convict Pandera, flees with Miriam to Babylon. Miriam bears a child Yeshu who in adult years goes to Jerusalem where he learns the "Ineffable Name." After various deeds of sorcery, having come into conflict with the sages of Israel he was hanged on a cabbage stem for he had previously abjured all trees by the Ineffable Name not to receive his body when he was hanged. Yehuda, a gardener, removed the body from its tomb and threw it into a water-channel in the garden.¹¹

It is readily seen that the book is simply a piece of folklore. Nothing of any historical value is in it. Just as the Talmud helps us understand the Jewish attitude to Jesus and Christianity in the first five centuries so the Tol'doth reveals Jewish attitudes in the fifth to tenth centuries--Klausner tells us that the Tol'doth was not composed before the tenth century.¹² It shows us that the attitude of Judaism to Jesus became worse when the Gentiles began to embrace Christianity and

10. Ibid., 47.

11. Ibid., 48-50.

12. Ibid., 53.

that it became much worse when the Christians began to persecute the Jews. Unable to retaliate in any physical way the abused race resorted to vengeance in the form of oral and written legends against Christianity and its founder.

2. GREEK AND LATIN

The Jewish historian Josephus in writing his Antiquities of the Jews (c. 93 A.D.) referred to Jesus only twice. Perhaps his silence regarding Jesus was due to his situation as a Pharisee and as a citizen of Rome.

"Now there was about this time (i.e. about the time of the rising against Pilate who wished to extract money from the Temple for the purpose of bringing water to Jerusalem from a distant spring) Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Messiah: and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first ceased not (so to do), for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine Prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him: and the race of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct even now."¹³

(The italicized words are generally regarded as later additions to the original.)

A second mention of Jesus by Josephus occurs when he tells how Annas the high priest brought before the Sanhedrin one named James "the brother of Jesus who was called Messiah" and condemned him to be stoned.¹⁴

The two references tell us little about Jesus except confirmation of his and his brother James' existence, of his role as a wonder-worker, and of his death.

13. Ibid., 55.

14. Ibid., 58.

Brief references to Jesus occur in the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny the Younger. Tacitus' Annales (115-117) in recounting Nero's burning of Rome say: "Christus...was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius."¹⁵

Suetonius in his Life of Claudius says of Claudius: "He banished from Rome the Jews who made great tumult because of Chrestus."¹⁶ The presence of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth upon Paul's arrival there in 50 is generally thought to be a result of this banishment.

Pliny the Younger wrote an Epistle to the emperor Trajan in 111 (that is, this is late evidence) in which he mentions that there was a popular movement of whose nature he knew little except that they were accustomed to meet on the Sabbath to sing a hymn to Christus as God.¹⁷

In summary we must say that the Latin and Greek sources, whether Jewish or pagan, tell us little about Jesus. If these were our sole sources for Jesus' life we should know he lived and was executed (by Pilate) but of his teaching and character nothing, and of his significance only that a sizeable group of followers existed by the early second century.

15. Henry Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, (Oxford University Press, London, 1943), 2.

16. Klausner, 60, op. cit.

17. Ibid., 61.

3. APOCRYPHAL AND UNCANONICAL GOSPELS

Only mention will be made of certain Christian writings that are known as the Apocryphal and Uncanonical (or Pseudipigraphical) Gospels. The numerous Apocryphal writings are of later date than the Canonical gospels, are mainly legend, and even if they did contain a grain of truth it would be impossible to separate that truth from the legend. The Uncanonical gospels such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of the Egyptians, and the Gospel of the Hebrews, are gospels which were not included at the time of the canonization of the New Testament. There is some slight information in them that is helpful, especially in the last one mentioned, but the dubious veracity of many of the texts make their value small though their volume is considerable.

4. PAULINE AND OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

It is not surprising that just as one must go to Jewish scriptures to study the life of Moses so one must go chiefly to documents that are from Christian pens to observe the life of Jesus. The earliest Christian writing was set down almost twenty years after the crucifixion. Paul the apostle wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians about 50 A.D. Paul's epistles are letters of encouragement, guidance, and teaching, to the church.

Paul has been accused by Jewish and some Christian scholars of perverting the gospel of Jesus, indeed of aiming to preach a new gospel. This accusation will be examined in a concluding chapter of this thesis.

As a source for facts about Jesus—the historic Jesus rather than the risen Christ—Paul's works are secondary to the Synoptic Gospels.

There is controversy over the question whether Paul knew Jesus or not. James S. Stewart establishes a firm thread of continuity from Jesus to Paul when he affirms: "Whether Paul had seen Jesus or not, he was thoroughly cognizant of the facts of Jesus' life."¹⁸ To answer the common view that reminiscences of the historic Jesus are meagre in Paul's writings Stewart lists Pauline references to Jesus under the headings, Jesus' life, his character, and his teaching. Stewart marshals substantial material for each of these, especially for Jesus' teaching. His view is: "...whether the apostle had a written source to draw upon or not, the fact is abundantly clear that stored within his mind was a great multitude of the memorable and decisive words which his Lord, in the days of his flesh, had spoken."¹⁹

Stewart's view is a welcome check to those, especially Jewish and some other writers, who depreciate the significance of Paul. Paul is not to be despised for his knowledge of Jesus. However, it must be confessed, that there is little new Jesus-material of an historical nature in Paul that cannot be found in the gospels. They are the primary sources.

Books such as the Revelation of John and the letter to the Hebrews add little real information to our knowledge of Jesus.

18. James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion, (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, 1935), 282.

19. Ibid., 291.

5. CANONICAL GOSPELS

It is the Canonical Gospels that have become the primary sources for the life of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels, those attributed to Matthew, Mark and Luke, are historical narratives of the life of Jesus though the definition by which they can be called "histories" must be a broad one. John's Gospel, later than the others, is the least historical of the four. It is usually considered separately from the others.

About the year 70 a Christian at Rome set down in writing the oral words and deeds of the tradition that he knew of Jesus of Nazareth. According to Papias (140): "Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ..."²⁰ Mark wished to tell his Gentile readers of a man who was the Messiah. It seems likely he wrote with the memory of recent Roman persecution of Christians and the Jewish war of 66-70 fresh in his mind. He points with dramatic detail to Jesus, a man of action.

Using Mark as a basis plus other oral tradition a Jew of the Diaspora, a hellenist like Paul and Barnabas, set down another record about 80 A.D. Although fifteen-sixteenths of Mark is in Matthew²¹ the later work has notable differences. Matthew is more Jewish than Mark. Jesus is the new lawgiver, he is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Jesus as a great teacher--it is Matthew that gives us the Sermon on the Mount--and Jesus as king and Jesus as founder of the

20. James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, (Scribners, (New York, 1909), 579.

21. Edgar J. Goodspeed, An Introduction to the New Testament, (Chicago, Illinois, 1937), 170.

church, these are characteristics of this writer's Jesus. The writer, whether Matthew the disciple or some other, wished to show that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah whose life bore out the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. However, the Jewish origins of Jesus' authority must not blind the reader to the writer's frequent deprecation of the ethics and parties of Judaism. By then (80) the break with Judaism was complete, the church was compelled to expand among the Gentiles only.

Sixty years after the crucifixion (c.90) one named Luke wrote a two-volume work, Luke-Acts, a life of Jesus and a history of the early days of the church. Luke's gospel, also based upon Mark but with some original material peculiar to Luke, was written to the Gentile world. Luke's Jesus is a teacher with a world view whose genealogy can be traced back right to Adam (not just to Abraham as in Matthew), who tells a parable of a good Samaritan, and who praises one of ten lepers and he a foreigner. Luke's polished style and his inclusion of the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Pharisee and the Publican have made his book precious to the church. Renan called it "the most beautiful book in the world."

The book of John is thought to have been written at Ephesus about 110 A.D. The author desired to write a gospel that would be attractive to the Greek world. In the Prologue his identification of Jesus with the Logos is the "wedding of reason and revelation, of philosophy and religion."²² John is fond of such words as life, light, truth, knowledge. His is a spiritual gospel in which the biographical facts of Jesus' life become secondary. Goodspeed calls John "a charter of Christian experience..."

22. Ibid., 309.

to know Christ through inner experience matters more than to have seen him face to face in Galilee."²³ John, rather than being but a chronicler, looks for the meaning of each event. John wrote against the gnostics, against the baptists (of John the baptist) and against the Jews ("the Jews" appear more than sixty times as the enemies of Jesus). Much of the material used by the synoptic writers is missing in John while very little new material is added. John's interest is that of the theologian. Jesus is, for John, the son of God.

Are the gospels reliable sources for a life of Jesus? All of them differ from history as we know it in that they are propaganda pieces intended to persuade and convict. John declared his aim to be: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God..."²⁴ The difficulty is that so far as we know Jesus never kept a diary or ever wrote anything. His followers were guided in their writing by their memories of him, by the needs of the church, and by the opposition of enemies. It can be said that with our present knowledge of the first century world and using the results of the intensive New Testament study that has been going on all over the world for 150 years it is possible to accept with confidence the testimony of the canonical gospels regarding the life of Jesus.

23. Ibid., 309.

24. John 20:31.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

1. THE JEWISHNESS OF JESUS

"Jesus was not a Christian: he was a Jew. He did not preach a new faith, but taught men to do the will of God; and in his opinion, as also in that of the Jews, the will of God was to be found in the Law of Moses and in the other books of Scripture."¹ Wellhausen's well-known declaration is worthy of consideration--indeed of near total acceptance--by all, whether Christian or Jew, who would understand the Nazarene. Jesus was a Jew. He was born, lived, and died in the provinces of Palestine. Had we no other records of first-century Palestine we would be able to reconstruct a reasonably adequate and true picture of first-century Jewish life through what we know of the life of Jesus. Jesus' religion was Judaism. Without Judaism it would be impossible to understand Jesus. He regularly entered the synagogue on the Sabbath "as was his custom." He was thoroughly versed in his Bible, the Hebrew Scriptures. His favorite passages came from the Psalms and the Prophets. In compliance with the instructions of Moses he enjoined a healed leper to go to a priest for verification of his cleanness.

He was a "...wholehearted supporter of his ancestral religion, though a severe critic of its moral shortcomings."² In the steps of Amos and Hosea he railed against those who tithed mint and cummin but forgot weightier matters. He spoke against abuses of the Torah but did not reject it. Indeed he declared that he had "not come to destroy

1. Henry J. Cadbury, Jesus: What Manner of Man, (The Macmillan Co., New York, 1947), 59f.

2. Ernest R. Traktner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, (Scribner's, New York, 1931), 54.

the law or the prophets...but to fulfil."³ Rabbi Fox and others declare that a proper interpretation of "fulfil" makes the meaning of the passage not that Jesus thought he had come to complete the law but that he sought to do what the law demanded, to enforce the law.⁴ Not a jot or tittle would pass from the law until it was fulfilled. It was of his disciples that the Pharisees declared that they did not fast. Jesus himself seems to have fasted (though it is recorded that he was once accused of being a glutton and a wine bibber).⁵

To the Canaanite woman whose daughter was mentally disturbed he said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."⁶ In sending out the twelve he instructed them to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not..."⁷ He held up the vain repetitions of Gentile praying as a negative example of how to pray. He was proud to be a Jew. This pride was both a cause and a result of his deep love for his land and his people. He wept over his holy city, the centre of Jewish aspirations, that in times past had destroyed her prophets and now was rejecting him.

Jesus was educated in the synagogue at Nazareth (there would be at least one synagogue in even so small a village as Nazareth⁸). His primer was the Hebrew Bible. In adult life he taught and preached in Aramaic, the popular language of the people. Did he know either Greek or Hebrew? The general answer of scholarship is in the negative. Yet

3. Mt. 5:17.

4. G. George Fox, The Jews, Jesus and Christ, (Argus Books, Chicago, 1953), 18.

5. Mt. 11:19; Luke 7:34.

6. Mt. 15:24.

7. Mt. 10:5.

8. Shirley Jackson Case, Jesus A New Biography, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1937), 194.

Luke records that he once read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The practice was for the reading of the unfamiliar Hebrew to be interspersed verse by verse by an oral Aramaic translation or paraphrase. Case is of the opinion that Jesus probably did not know Hebrew for there is record that he learned carpentry, not that he was set aside for training as a scribe. Except for a few Greek phrases that he may have picked up in contact with foreigners the Aramaic of daily life was sufficient for his purposes.⁹

His understanding of nature was in character with general first-century knowledge. He accepted the prevailing belief in the activity of evil spirits and demons in cases of lunacy. In this and other ways he was "a child of his time and place."¹⁰

His thinking was practical and concrete rather than metaphysical and abstract. His manner of teaching then was Jewish, not Greek. He was a "rab", a foremost representative of the rabbinical style familiar to his hearers. He used the parable as did his contemporaries Hillel and Akiba. He took his illustrations from the every-day tasks of farming, house keeping, and the baking of bread. He loved to speak of the simple beauty of nature's flowers and birds.

His God was the God of the Old Testament. He may have denied any supra-mundane character for himself when he once retorted: "There is none good but one, that is, God."¹¹ He preached the coming of a basileia, a kingdom. He was concerned to declare that it was near at hand and that men should prepare for it through repentance. He preached a Messianic

9. Ibid., 197.

10. Henry J. Cadbury, The Peril of Modernizing Jesus, (Macmillan Company, New York, 1937), 51.

11. Mark 10:19.

message that revolved round himself.¹²

Popular Christianity has looked upon the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus' summation of the Law as love to God and love to man, as "new" teaching. But every clause of the Lord's Prayer is to be found in the Talmud.¹³ The Sermon on the Mount is unique in its concise organization but contains not one idea which cannot be paralleled in the sayings of Jesus' rabbinical contemporaries or predecessors. It is not Jesus but the enquiring lawyer who quotes the Shema of Deuteronomy enjoining one to love God and one's neighbor. Jesus upholds the Shema but it did not originate with him.

There have been those, such as Houston S. Chamberlain, Haupt and Kaminka, who have sought to deny the Jewish origins of Jesus. Because he was a citizen of "Galilee of the Gentiles" which even as recently as Maccabbean times had but a minority of Jews they hold that he was not a Semite, but an Aryan.¹⁴ This has been successfully refuted by Klausner's statements that the strongest evidence of the non-Gentilic origin of Jesus was his Jewishness which is expressed in his teaching and customs.

Jesus was a Jew. Indeed, he was one of the people, an 'Am-ha'-aretz. He chose his friends and followers from this group. His preaching can be identified only with Judaism. Perhaps no stronger evidence can be found for his essential Jewishness than the fact that the early church, exemplified by Peter and James, maintained the practices

12. Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times and Teaching (Macmillan Company, New York, 1925), 368.

13. Ibid., 387.

14. Ibid., 233.

of fasting, synagogue worship, abstention from forbidden foods, and circumcision. For the first seventeen years the early Christian group made no attempt to spread the gospel among the Gentiles.¹⁵ It was from the Hellenistic thinking of Paul that conflict with traditional Jewish practices arose.

2. NON-JEWISH DIFFERENCES

The foregoing discussion of the Jewishness of Jesus has overlooked the possibility of non-Jewish elements in Jesus. Fundamental points of originality in Jesus will be dealt with later. It will be sufficient at this stage to simply mention some of the non-Jewish elements in Jesus that suggest that he was not just a child of his heritage and his times, that he indeed did bring some "new" teaching.

Had Jesus been clearly a rebel he would not have had the freedom of the synagogues that he had. He was essentially a Jew. Yet he was executed, at least indirectly, through the opposition of fellow-Jews. There were differences in this teacher that made this execution necessary. He upheld the Sabbath yet on that day he cured men of diseases and afflictions that were not dangerous. He justified the action of his disciples when they plucked ears of corn on the day of rest. To criticism of his innovations he replied that one does not put new wine into old bottles, or new patches on old cloth. Here he implied the necessity for an essential change, rather than a slight or gradual one, in the religious life of his day. Klausner maintains that Jesus' criticism of the ceremonial laws placed them in so secondary a position to the moral laws that the effect was "almost to nullify them."¹⁶

15. Ibid., 367.

16. Ibid., 371.

The prophets had done this also but they were never so radical as Jesus. For them the national ideal, the unity of Israel was always precious. In Klausner's view Jesus' emphasis upon the moral before the ceremonial meant a decline of the national life.

Jesus was a Jew, but he was a radical Jew. He was too Jewish.¹⁷ He maintained the family as the basic unit of social living but held to a strict rejection of divorce, except, as in Matthew 5:32, upon grounds of adultery. He praised those who were willing to be eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom. He urged men to resist not evil but to turn the other cheek to it. The rich shall be as readily admitted to heaven as a camel may go through the eye of a needle. To Klausner these attitudes are Jewish yet a denial of Judaism. They promote a negation of Jewish culture and Jewish life by asking that a man believe only in God and practice an extreme ethic.¹⁸

Cadbury also mentions this extremism, this note of radicalness in the teaching of Jesus. Christians have not always recognized this. It is this radicalness in Jesus that makes his ethics too ideal for Klausner, too unrealistic, and therefore of diminished value.

People have said that, to the rabbis God was a king while to Jesus he was a father. Montefiore dismisses such thinking as unworthy of rebuttal. He says that Jesus' commands to love one's enemies and his practice of having fellowship with the "lost", the publicans and sinners of Israel, these were differences, indeed unique attitudes in Judaism, especially his saving of the lost.

17. Ibid., 374.

18. Ibid., 374.

Jesus was a son of David yet at the same time he was different; he spoke "...not as the scribes." To what extent he differed from first-century Judaism and to what extent these differences were valid innovations is a fundamental question for students of the life of Jesus.

3. THE WAY OF SALVATION

A paper of this nature cannot attempt a discussion of the complete life of Jesus--if indeed that is possible for anyone. Instead some issues are dealt with more fully than others, such as Jesus' attitude to the Law, simply because these matters are of particular interest to the Jewish mind. One should not hope then to see, in this paper, the portrait of Jesus, though one is justified in hoping to discover something of a Jewish portrait(s) of the Man of Galilee.

With this note of introduction may we now view Jesus' teaching under the title, "The Way of Salvation." We shall discuss Jesus' teaching as to religious requirements, social teaching, and ethical requirements.

A. Religious Requirements.

Did Jesus uphold the Law (Torah) or did he reject it? As was mentioned, Jewish writers devote considerable energy to the discovery of Jesus' relationship to the Law. Professor George Foot Moore of Harvard, though not a Jew, speaks a common Jewish viewpoint in his volume on Judaism:

The attitude of Jesus and his immediate followers toward the so-called ceremonial law was, as has already been observed, entirely orthodox. Not only does he declare in the most sweeping terms the perpetuity of the whole law

but he enjoins obedience to it in ritual details such as the cleansing of a leper, and even approves of rabbinical extensions like the tithing of garden herbs. That justice and compassion and fidelity are "weightier matters," does not mean that neglect of mint, anise, and cumin is commendable. The disciples in Jerusalem had so little notion of exempting themselves from the ceremonial law that they were slow to admit that Gentile believers could be saved without assuming by circumcision the obligation to keep every article of it.¹⁹

Trattner, discussing this statement, is generally in agreement with Moore though he states that there were differences between Jesus' attitude to the Law and the attitude of his contemporaries, and these differences aroused opposition.

In speaking of "differences" in Jesus brief mention was made of Klausner's view that Jesus "subconsciously" tended to criticize the ceremonial law so as to subordinate the ceremonial law to the ethical. For Klausner, Jesus is always essentially a Jew. Yet "had not Jesus' teaching contained a kernel of opposition to Judaism, Paul could never in the name of Jesus have set aside the ceremonial laws, and broken through the barriers of national Judaism."²⁰ Jocz considers Klausner's admission of a "kernel of opposition" significant. It must be noted, that for Klausner this kernel is only an implicit tendency, an "exaggerated Judaism."²¹

Jesus was at one with the rabbis in his attitude to the Law, yet he was not always obedient to his training. He declared that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Klausner and others find Rabbinic parallels for this and other striking teaching of

19. George Foot Moore, Judaism In The First Centuries of the Christian Era, The Age of the Tannaim, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1927), II, 9.

20. Klausner, op. cit., 369.

21. Ibid., 374.

Jesus but even though such exist, even if these parallels were contemporaneous with or earlier than Jesus--which is rarely so--still the note in Jesus stands outside the main stream of Judaism. Jewish scholars usually deny that Jesus was consciously opposed to the Law. How then could his teaching have contained a "kernel of opposition"? T. W. Manson holds the view that Jesus did not reject the law nor did he lightly disregard any of its commands. If he broke the laws he did so consciously "...in the interests of something greater than the Law and the Temple. That something is the Kingdom of God."²² This view raises the problem of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. Montefiore holds that Jesus thought himself to be the Messiah but did not claim authority over the Law by virtue of his Messiahship. When a higher principle than the Mosaic law seemed necessary he did not hesitate to break the Mosaic precepts. But by what motive or authority did Jesus set aside divinely given law (it seems fair to say that he never questioned its divine origin)? Jocz answers that Montefiore's position that Jesus did not rely on his Messianic office for his authority is possible but not true to the Synoptic thinking. The question, says Jocz, is did Jesus assign such authority to the Messianic office as to put the Messiah above the Law? That he did so is the contention of the gospel writers, Jocz maintains. For Jocz, Jesus made certain changes in the Law, not because of "humanistic motives or moralistic scruples" but because "he identified the Kingdom with his own person...It is as the Servant of God, the King Messiah, that Jesus claimed the authority which he knew to be delegated by God."²³ Jesus did not abrogate the Law, he always accepted it as divinely appointed, but the Messiah had come to "fulfil" it. In

22. T. W. Manson, Judaism and Christianity, (Cambridge, 1935), 129, quoted by Jacob Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ, A Study in The Controversy Between Church and Synagogue, (S.P.C.K., London, 1949 and 1954), 23.

the days of the Messiah the law would be written within the hearts of God's people.²⁴

Jocz' position, a view that reflects a Christian as well as a Jewish background, that Jesus judged the law from his exalted conception of the Messianic, and therefore his own office, is a bit too extreme for most Jews to accept. The mainstream of Judaism would hold the more guarded view of Klausner that Jesus never consciously spoke or acted against Mosaic precepts.

Montefiore cites Jesus attitude to the Law as his stumbling block. Jesus assumes the role of prophet as did Amos and Jeremiah, but he speaks in a different day. By the first century the legalistic development of Judaism had fixed the law in its entirety as divinely given. Indeed, says Montefiore, the law does not say it is more important to observe the Sabbath than to love mercy "but it does say that all the ritual and ceremonial commands are the direct ordainment of the perfect God..."²⁵ Therefore was not the Law divine? Or had Jesus the authority to alter it? Was it to be honored both in its observance and in its breach? This was Jesus' stumbling block. How could the Law be disobeyed as well as obeyed. It was impossible for him to be consistent. Amos could have preached a separation of the moral and ritual commands with consistency, for in his day the Law was not fixed; such a separation is accepted today. But in Jesus' day it could only be held as inconsistent. Seeing this inconsistency the Pharisees and Rabbis opposed him, and were justified in so doing says Montefiore.²⁶

24. Jeremiah 31:31ff.

25. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, (Macmillan and Co., London, 1927), I, cxix.

26. Ibid., 156-157.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket I had been sitting under. I looked up at the sky, which was a pale, hazy blue. The air was still, and the silence was broken only by the distant hum of traffic.

I walked towards the building, my footsteps echoing on the wet pavement. The architecture was modern, with clean lines and large windows that reflected the morning light. I felt a sense of anticipation, a mix of excitement and nervousness. This was my first day at the new job, and I was determined to make a good impression.

The receptionist greeted me with a friendly smile, leading me to my office. It was a small, cozy space with a desk, a chair, and a window that looked out onto the city. I took a moment to settle in, feeling a sense of belonging. The office was quiet, and I could hear the soft rustle of papers and the gentle click of a pen.

My first task was to review the files on my desk. I found them to be well-organized and easy to navigate. The information was clear and concise, and I felt confident that I could handle the job. I took a deep breath, feeling a sense of purpose and direction. This was my chance to shine, and I was ready to take on whatever came my way.

As the day progressed, I found myself becoming more comfortable in my new environment. The colleagues I met were friendly and helpful, and they made me feel like I was part of a team. I was able to complete my tasks efficiently, and I received positive feedback from my supervisor. I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride in my work.

The day ended with a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. I had successfully completed my first day at the new job, and I was looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. I felt a sense of hope and optimism, knowing that I was on the right path and that I was capable of achieving my goals.

As I walked home, I reflected on the day's events. I felt a sense of growth and learning, and I was grateful for the experience. I knew that this was just the beginning of my journey, and I was excited to see where it would lead me. I felt a sense of peace and contentment, knowing that I had taken the first step towards a better future.

Montefiore has a point. Is the decalogue absolute or relative? The question is an old one. It can be said that this is the stumbling block for every would-be righteous man. To kill is forbidden but what does one do when one's family is threatened by the knock of German soldiers at the door?

Jesus was a Jew. He held the respect of a Jew for the Law. He made some alterations but generally he upheld adherence to the Law.

It has been said that Judaism was firmly grounded on two practices: circumcision and Sabbath observance. It is noteworthy that the synoptic gospels have only two references to circumcision and these record the circumcisions of John the Baptist and of Jesus.²⁷ In John Jesus speaks once using the fact that circumcision was sometimes performed on the Sabbath as precedence for his practice of healing on the day of rest.²⁸ It seems that Jesus had no quarrel with Mosaic circumcision. It was Paul that made this rite a controversy in the early church.

Jesus was not so silent regarding Sabbath observance. When the Pharisees once reproached him for his disciples' plucking of some ears of corn on the Sabbath he retorted: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."²⁹ Klausner quotes rabbinic parallels to this striking utterance of Jesus: "The Sabbath was given into your hand, and ye were not given into its hand."³⁰ Though there exist such rabbinic parrallels, still no Pharisee would consent to the conclusion that it was permissible to pluck corn on the Sabbath. Montefiore points out

27. Luke 1:59; 2:21.
 28. John 7:22, 23.
 29. Mark 2:27.
 30. Klausner, op. cit., 278.

that on the whole the Sabbath law though complex was "a joy and a blessing" to most Jews. However he thinks Jesus' answer was a welcome note amid the detailed casuistry which is always the danger of legalism. Jesus looked deeper to a principle that did not say the Law was wrong but that a higher principle was involved.

The point at which Jesus' Sabbath attitude was most fiercely opposed was that of Sabbath healing. In the Talmud "the saving of human life sets aside the laws of the Sabbath" but the Talmud forbids the healing of an illness which is in no sense dangerous.³¹ Jesus' view, says Abrahams, was that "no act of mercy, whether the need pressed or not, was to be intermitted because of the Sabbath."³² Thus Jesus' prophetic insight inevitably came into conflict with the "status quo" religious leaders of his day.

One of the characteristic notes of Jesus' preaching was his emphasis upon the importance of the inner motive behind the outward deed. He spoke of a lust which condemned a man as an adulterer in the heart. In this he was Prophetic as opposed to Pharisaic. The Pharisaic mind upheld the letter of the Law. The Prophetic stressed an inwardness of mercy rather than sacrifice, and saw righteousness as justice, mercy, and humble fellowship with God.³³ Priestly sacrifices had called forth Amos' abuse. Times now had changed. The objects of Jesus' ire were Sabbath casuistry and hypocritical prayers and tithes. Inwardness and moral goodness--these were the essentials.

31. Ibid., 278.

32. Israel Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1917), 135.

33. Micah 6:8.

Martin Buber has a useful discussion of the necessity for inner faith in Two Types of Faith. Torah meant:

...to extend the hearing of the Word to the whole dimension of human existence. This demand made it necessary to struggle against a withering or hardening, which knew of no other fulfilment than the carrying out of rules...Indeed the constant danger...is that the keeping of it (Torah) can persist apart from the intended surrender to the divine will, and can even begin as such, which surrender can alone invest the attitude with meaning and thereby with its right.³⁴

Judaism at its best, past and present, has agreed with the necessity of inner devotion to God as the mainspring of all religious action. Jesus was right in this, Judaism says, but his preoccupation with the threat of hypocrisy led him to underestimate the true value of fasting, abstention from forbidden foods, and other ritual requirements of the Law. We can imagine the wrath of his hearers when Jesus dared to question the food laws with "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man."³⁵

B. Social Teaching

In the minds of most Jewish authorities Jesus' social teaching had serious limitations. His references to the dangers of wealth, the inevitability of poverty, his rejection of his family ties (though there are several exceptions to this), his acquiescence to Caesar's status quo--these suggest that he was narrow, a purveyor of an impractical other-worldly philosophy. He gave instructions for his friends to go only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." No Christ of the world he, but a mere "provincial".

34. Martin Buber, Two Types of Faith, (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1951), 58.

35. Mt. 15:11.

What Jesus' full attitude was to each of these matters is difficult to say. We must admit that his views in social matters were often not our views. Klausner and others make much of the importance of an apocalyptic element in Jesus which gave rise to his extremist teaching. What need for a wife when the kingdom was "near", indeed "at hand"? The injustice of Rome and the unfaithfulness of a wife become tolerable with the hope of the imminent advent of the Kingdom.

C. Ethical Requirements

In the Jewish mind the main strength of Jesus lay in his ethical teaching. "If we omitted the miracles and a few mystical sayings which tend to deify the Son of Man, and preserved only the moral precepts and parables, the Gospels would count as one of the most wonderful collections of ethical teaching in the world."³⁶ Few, whether Jew or Greek or Indian, have failed to recognize the high worth of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and his Golden Rule. Here is the Decalogue but so much more! Here it is said that the truly happy are the meek, the disinherited, the persecuted, the pure in heart. Men are urged not to resist evil and to love their enemies. Men are to strive to be perfect even as the Father is perfect. Alms are to be given in secret so that the left hand is ignorant of the good works of the right. Anxiety for the material necessities of the morrow betrays lack of faith in Providence that has clothed even the lilies of the field with a glory greater than Solomon's. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."³⁷

36. Klausner, op. cit., 381.

37. Mt. 6:33.

Jesus was a great ethical teacher. His teaching bears the mark of genius. But Klausner thinks Jesus' ethics extreme. He was too much an idealist. His standards were so high that on occasion he was not able to attain to them himself. Klausner points to the Inquisition, the Nazi pogroms, and the monastic movement of the Middle Ages as proof of an ethic that in practice was unworkable. The "arch-idealist"³⁸ lived a life almost without reproach yet his practice fell behind his precept.

Montefiore thinks such argument as the foregoing unacceptable. That Jesus' ideals have not been fully practiced does not deny their validity and worth. A man's reach should exceed his grasp. Ideals that are possible of fulfillment are no longer ideals, states Montefiore.³⁹

Jesus never intended to set up a universal ethical system, says Klausner. In the intermission before the End he preached a morality of preparation for that End. It was a short-term morality. Because of Jesus' "pessimism" the monks of the Middle Ages found basis for ascetic disregard of bodily comforts. Rejection of the body has always been a denial of Judaism. Judaism strives to embrace the whole of life, say the Jews.

The final criticism of our Jewish study of Jesus' ethics is that the teaching of Jesus was not new. Books have been written giving rabbinic and other parallels to the Sermon on the Mount. Klausner is representative of the general Jewish position when he emphatically says:

38. H. G. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, (Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1931), 100.

39. C. G. Montefiore, Liberal Judaism and Hellenism, (London, 1918), 128, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 123.

"...throughout the Gospels there is not one idea of ethical teaching which cannot be paralleled either in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, or in the Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the period near to the time of Jesus."⁴⁰ Jesus' contribution then is not new teaching but that he gathered together and concentrated the ethical teachings of his day so as to make them more prominent.

4. JESUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

It is possible to name four parties within the political and spiritual Judaism of first-century Palestine: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. It is helpful to attempt to discover Jesus' relation to each of these groups.

The Pharisees were the popular party. This was the party of the middle class, the ordinary people. Montefiore estimates that five-sixths of the people were more or less Pharisaic. Pharisaism provided the impetus for Jewish piety. It stressed high ethical standards.

The Gospels are a severe attack on the Pharisees. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for preaching good and not practicing it, for being hypocrites, tithing mint and cummin and neglecting justice and love and mercy. "Blind leaders of the blind" and "whited sepulchres", he called them; they loved to sit in places of honor.

Orthodox Judaism has generally dismissed Jesus' anti-Pharisaic charges as groundless and false. Klausner rejects that position. He is willing to admit that Jesus was at least partly correct for, says Klausner, such shortcomings can be seen in the religious leaders of

40. Klausner, op. cit., 384.

41. Ibid., 213.

every generation.⁴¹

Since Klausner has shown integrity in being sympathetic to Jesus' estimate of Pharisaism, it is possible that it is time for Christian scholarship to recognize that Jesus' attitude to the Pharisees is extreme and must not be accepted en toto. Montefiore's judgment that Jesus' statements are "too sweeping and generalized"⁴² is a sound opinion. Pharisaism, whatever its weaknesses, was the best that Judaism knew at that time.

In this connection, any tendency to entirely dilute the religious fervor of Jesus' day should be summarily halted by Klausner's mention of the action of Caius Caligula in the years 39-40 A.D. In protest against the intention of Caligula to set up an image in the Temple, tens of thousands of Jews flocked to the plain of Acre and later to Tiberias, and fell down on their knees before the Legate Petronius with the words, "Better for us to die than to transgress our Law."⁴³ For Klausner this incident exemplifies "a moral heroism and devotion" which refutes those who speak only of the aridity of Judaism and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Klausner's view that closely relates Jesus with Pharisaism would seem to be substantially true:

...without Pharisaism the career of Jesus is incomprehensible and even impossible, and that despite all the Christian antagonism to the Pharisees, the teaching of the Pharisees remained the basis of early Christian teaching until such time as it gathered within itself elements from non-Jewish sources.⁴⁴

While the Pharisees were everyday people the Sadducees, on the other hand, were the aristocrats. They had managed to procure the high-

42. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, (Macmillan and Co., London, 1927), I, cxv.

43. Klausner, op. cit., 223.

44. Ibid., 216.

priestly office for their men and were willing to compromise principle if necessary to maintain their influence with both Herod and Rome. There is a view that it was this group, rather than the Pharisees or the Jews as a whole as the gospel historians seem to indicate, that were the prime agitators for the execution of Jesus.⁴⁵ Klausner admits this view is a possibility but is more inclined to the view that Jesus the carpenter, and his poor companions had little to do with the aristocratic Sadducees. The conservatism of the Sadducees and their neglect of the messianic hope placed them much further from Jesus than were the Pharisees and the Essenes.⁴⁶

The Essenes were a sect of Judaism numbering some four thousand at the time of Jesus, according to Josephus. They lived in villages on a somewhat communal basis.

Krause and Graetz say Jesus was an Essene. Klausner says he was influenced by the Essenes. Montefiore denies that he was an Essene. Jesus had points of resemblance with the Essenes: his abstention from political and national affairs, his eschatological and Messianic expectations, certain sociological ideals, and his dislike of oaths.⁴⁷ Yet Jesus was different in other respects: he was not strict about Sabbath observance as they were, he did not keep to himself but moved freely among outcast persons, he did not baptize (though his disciples did) and he laid no stress on outward piety.

45. D. Chwolson, Das Letzte Passamahl Christi Und Der Tag Seines Todes, (St. Petersburg, 1892), 86, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 17.

46. Klausner, op. cit., 222.

47. Ibid., 211, and Montefiore, op. cit., cxii.

Klausner speaks for the view of most Jewish scholarship when he suggests that "...whatever of primitive Christianity is not derivable from Pharisaism may be sought for in Essenism."⁴⁸

The problem of the relationship of Jesus to the Essenic movement has gained new interest since the discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. For some scholars, the similarities in teaching and practice of the ancient Qumran community and the life of Jesus were conclusive evidence that the fountain from which Jesus drew was Essenism. Millar Burrows' The Dead Sea Scrolls treads more cautiously than some of these earlier reports did. He categorically rejects the view that Jesus was an Essene: "This is quite out of the question as all competent historians now recognize."⁴⁹ Burrows mentions many similarities between Jesus sayings and practices and those of the Essenes. He argues that there were also some differences. The Habbakuk Commentary knows of a "teacher of righteousness" whose activities resemble those of Jesus. Burrows finds more parallels between the Dead Sea community and the early church, and the writer of the gospel of John, than with Jesus. The sayings of Jesus are generally more related to the Apocalyptic literature of Judaism than to anything in the scrolls.⁵⁰ After seven years' study of the scrolls Burrows confesses: "I do not find my understanding of the New Testament substantially affected."⁵¹

In Burrows' view Jesus was influenced by what was Essenic thinking, or by what may have been a more general thinking of the day. The evidence of the scrolls is still too new and not as yet complete enough for anyone to speak with definiteness upon the relationship of Jesus to the Essenes.

48. Klausner, Ibid., 212.

49. Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, (The Viking Press, New York, 1955), 329.

50. Ibid., 331.

Josephus called one group of Jews the "Fourth Philosophy" because they came fourth after the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. These were the zealots or sicarii. The zealots were Judaism's patriots, extreme nationalists who sought to expel all foreign authority by force if necessary. Zeitlin says that Jesus rejected any sympathy for the Zealot movement when he asked: "Be ye come out as a robber"?⁵² One of Jesus' disciples was once named as "Simon the Zealot". It is generally held that Judas Iscariot was one of the Zealot group. That Jesus had little to do with them seems obvious and Judas' realization of the disparity existing between the plans of Jesus and those of the Zealots led to his betrayal of his leader.

5. THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

"Originality" means new, not imitated, -underived. Was there originality in Jesus? If so, where did it lie? Some think that Jesus had no originality. Others say that his originality lay not in what he taught, but how he taught.⁵³ Rabbi I. M. Wise speaks for the group that denies Jesus' originality when he challenges Christianity "to produce from the Gospels any sound, humane, and universal doctrine not contained in our Judaism...no one has ever been able to discover anything new and original in the Gospels."⁵⁴

52. Solomon Zeitlin, Who Crucified Jesus?, (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1942, 1947), 157.

53. Jocz, op. cit., 136.

54. I. M. Wise, The Martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth, (Cincinnati, 1883), 132 f, quoted in Jocz, op. cit., 136.

The work of such men as Klausner, Montefiore, Herford, and R. C. Charles has greatly increased our knowledge of the parallels to the sayings of Jesus. Such scholarship has tended to deny any originality in Jesus as for example the following:

...the concept of the Kingdom of God was wholly Jewish... But the point at present is simply this, that in speaking of the Kingdom of God Jesus was using a purely Jewish term, and using it just as it had been used for centuries before his time. It has not been shown that he added any new feature to the meaning which it had for the common understanding of those who heard him.⁵⁵

According to Jocz the view of Wise is an extreme one. The general trend of Judaism is to allow a certain degree of independence on the part of Jesus.

Before discussing Jewish estimates of Jesus' originality it may be useful to refer to two Christian scholars, E. F. Scott and E. C. Colwell, who have some helpful material on this topic. Colwell's chapter on originality in his An Approach To The Teaching Of Jesus, urges Christians to beware of assigning originality to Jesus for the Golden Rule and the Fatherhood of God. Both were common emphases in the past and present Judaism of Jesus' day. Colwell says that one piece of evidence that Jesus was unique was the difficulty that we have to categorize him. Some have made him an Essene, more, a Pharisee, and some, a Sadducee or Zealot, but he doesn't quite fit into any of the categories.

E. F. Scott lists seven marks of Jesus' originality: (1) he gave a new unity to the moral law; (2) his morality springs out of a new relationship to God; (3) his value of the individual; (4) he made moral quality dependent upon intention; (5) his ethic is positive; (6) the

55. R. Travers Herford, Talmud and Apocrypha, (Socino Press, London, 1933), 276.

ethic is purified of all extraneous elements; and (7) by his own character Jesus gave reality to the moral ideal.⁵⁶

Hyman Enelow, Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, New York, supports those Jews who accept the presence of some originality in Jesus' work. We must be careful, says Enelow, about what we mean by "originality". He accepts Hazlitt's definition to the effect that originality does not consist in showing what has never been but in pointing out what is before our eyes.⁵⁷

There are at least five notes of originality that are acknowledged by Jewish writers. The first, is that Jesus gathered together the sayings of previous and contemporary literature into a concise and impressive form.⁵⁸ In the words of Colwell: "Jesus is original in the sense not that he creates new material but that he uses it to build a new structure."⁵⁹

The second, is Montefiore's claim that Jesus' originality lay in his "trenchantness", in his "eager insistency", in "a fire, a passion and an intensity", which characterizes some of his sayings.⁶⁰

The third which is not unrelated to the second, is that it was the tone of his teaching, his note of authority that was original.⁶¹ "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethern, ye have done it unto me." No one else had ever said "but I say unto you."

56. E. F. Scott, The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1924), 17 seq.

57. H. G. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, (Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1931), 15.

58. Klausner, op. cit., 389.

59. Ernest Cadman Colwell, An Approach to The Teaching of Jesus, (Abingdon Cokesbury Press, New York, 1947), 38.

60. C. G. Montefiore, Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings, (Macmillan and Co., London, 1930), 85.

61. Samuel Krause, "Jesus", The Jewish Encyclopedia, (Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1934), VII, 163.

It was his "underived power" rather than the novelty of his teaching that was original.⁶²

The fourth, is that supreme personality is his greatest originality.⁶³ Akin to this is Graetz' admiration of his "high-minded earnestness and spotless moral purity."⁶⁴

The fifth, are a group of "new teachings", all of them from Montefiore's Synoptic Gospels. Montefiore considers Jesus' intentional seeking out the lost as a new and original feature of his teaching. It was impossible to obey the Law if one associated with sinners. Another new teaching (if it be accepted that this was the mind of Jesus) was Jesus' relationship of special Sonship with God.⁶⁵ Jesus taught the practice of self-denial,⁶⁶ and he asked men both to serve others and to do this service with humility.⁶⁷ These were new. Judaism had taught service and it had honored humility but it had not connected them.

Jesus did make original contributions. But in this he still stands inside the circle of Jewish life; as Klausner puts it, "Jesus is the most Jewish of Jews, more Jewish than Simeon ben Shetach, more even than Hillel."⁶⁸

62. Henry J. Cadbury, Jesus: What Manner of Man, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1947), 72.

63. Enelow, op. cit., 18.

64. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, (The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1893), II, 149.

65. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, II, 180.

66. Ibid., 201.

67. Ibid., 218.

68. Klausner, op. cit., 374.

CHAPTER IV
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS

1. JESUS, THE MESSIAH

The idea of a Messiah (Christ), an "anointed one", grew out of Israel's firm belief that she was an elect nation, God's own people, to whom God had promised prosperity. As the conditions of life deteriorated with exile being followed by invasion, the Jewish mind gradually embraced the idea of a Messiah, a divinely sent person who would vindicate God's promises and usher in the hoped for new age.

The idea of a Messiah began in the writings of the Prophets. At least three aspects were present in the Prophetic conception: the restoration of the reign of Yahweh, the restoration of the chosen people, and the restoration of the house of David.¹ It cannot be said that the hope was a hope for a Messiah yet. There were various views. When a Messiah was spoken of it was as a "collective personality composed of the endless line of Davidic kings."²

Jewish apocalyptic literature of the second century B.C. and later added much to the Messianic ideas begun in the Prophetic books. Of the considerable amount of literature written in the period 168-135 B.C. Daniel was the only book to be canonized. Only a portion of the literature survived. The times were difficult for this was the period of the Maccabbean revolt and the struggle with Rome. Guignebert says that Judaism had two programs of eschatological thought at this time. According to the one, God would manifest the Messiah and the wicked

1. Ch. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, (E.P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1939), 130.

2. Ibid., 130.

would be defeated. There would be a long period of peace (sometimes four hundred years, more often a thousand) under the reign of the Messiah. Then would follow the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the beginning of the eternal reign of God. In the second program, after the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of the wicked, the dead would at once be raised. After judgment the eternal reign of the Messiah would begin.³

There were several variants to these central themes. Warning of the Messiah's coming would be given through calamities of all kinds. He would be preceded by Elijah.⁴ The wicked would band together in a coalition under a leader (Christians later called him Anti-Christ). The coming of the Messiah would be followed by the establishment of the Messianic Age, the Golden Age, a time of unparalleled prosperity. Jewish imagination warmed to the task of describing the wonderful day, a time when the wolf would lie down with the lamb, every grape would yield a kor (about ninety gallons) of wine, and every spear would be used as a pruning hook.⁵

The figure of a Messiah was generally secondary to that of the establishment of a Messianic Kingdom. For some there was no Messiah-intermediary but only God himself acting to bring in his reign on earth. It was never an other-worldly reign but was to take place here, on this plane of existence.

The first century of this era was a time of heightened Messianic speculation. It was a period of restlessness and disorder which confusion was both a result and a cause of many rebellions, some of them

3. Ibid., 135.

4. Malachi 3:23.

5. Guignebert, op. cit., 135 f.

led by would-be messiahs. Those scholars who would diminish the extent of the Messianic idea in first-century Palestine are neglecting to recognize the fact of these leaders and the large numbers that rallied to support them. The idea of a Messiah was so prevalent that it produced a certain Judas, a Theudas, Judas the Galilean, John of Gircula, one Simon (a slave of Herod), and an Egyptian.⁶ The hope for a Messiah was a popular one, though no doubt less prominent among the Pharisaic legalists than among unlettered ordinary people.

The various conceptions of the Messiah held at the time have been distinguished by Bossuet as a "politico-national" type of Messiah and an "apocalyptic-eschatological."⁷ These categories should not be considered as strictly definitive, for as the eminent authority upon Judaism, George Foot Moore, informs us, there was no orthodox view, no consistently accepted doctrine of the Messiah, until the Tannaim of the second century.

Rabbi Silver has made much of the existence of a Jewish belief that the Messianic Age would occur in the time of the sixth millenium. According to this view, first-century Judaism was eagerly awaiting the year 5,000 in the Hebrew calendar, which would usher in the sixth millenium, the age of the kingdom of God. Silver states that the Millenium was not to be begun by the Messiah but by God. The Millenium would be inevitable, an event which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities.⁸

6. Ibid., 152, and G. George Fox, The Jews, Jesus and Christ, (Argus Books, Chicago, 1953), 7.

7. Bossuet, Kyrios Christos, 2, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 154.

8. Abba Hillel Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel, From the First Through the Seventeenth Centuries, (Macmillan Co., New York, 1927), 6 f.

Each group of people had their own idea of the nature of the Messiah. The Zealots looked for a political-military deliverer. The school of Shammai added to this the attributes of ardent religious zeal and moral purity. Hillel expected a prince of peace. All agreed that he would spring from the line of David.⁹

Deutero-Isaiah speaks of a Servant of Yahweh. Was the Servant part of the Messianic expectation? The exquisite poetry of Isaiah 53, "...he was despised and rejected of men...", was used by the great Handel to refer to Jesus, "the Messiah." Guignebert affirms however, that most scholars agree that the servant referred to is a personification of the people, Israel, rather than an individual.¹⁰ It was entirely natural that Christians should choose to adapt the idea to Jesus. Whether or not Christians were right in so doing, it must be said that, the conception of servant in Deutero-Isaiah stands outside the common Messianic conception.

The Servant of Deutero-Isaiah was called a "suffering" servant. To what extent did Judaism accept the idea of a suffering Messiah? The answer is that Judaism did not accept such, indeed has never accepted such. According to Klausner there is nothing of a suffering Messiah in the whole Tannaitic period.¹¹ The importance of suffering in the Messianic conceptions seems to have resulted from Christian influence. Judaism did not expect a suffering Messiah.

Our primary source for discussing problems related to first-century Palestine is always the Gospels. The Tannaim write too late to be fully relied on. A passing glance through the Gospels will demonstrate an im-

9. Graetz., op. cit., 144.

10. Guignebert, op. cit., 135.

11. Joseph Klausner, Die Messianischen Vorstellungen des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten, (Berlin, 1904), 2, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 153.

portant presupposition of every gospel narrative, a conviction that the Messiah had come. They tell of Jesus beginning his preaching with sermons of warning, calling his hearers to repent for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Though the statement tells us nothing about Jesus' relationship to the Messianic era it does tell us of his compelling conviction that God's messianic activity was near, the days had been fulfilled.

The Gospels write of a Messiah but he is not a slavish imitation of Jewish Messianic expectations. Instead of destroying the wicked and establishing a Messianic peace his kingdom was not to be of this world. He often called himself the "Son of Man". He seemed to want to identify himself with the predictions of Daniel. In Klausner's view, the phrase ben-Adam is merely an equivalent for "man" or "I", man as distinguished from the animals. Sometimes Jesus deliberately used it, hinting that he too was a prophet.¹² Jesus took the idea of the Messiah and refashioned it. It was a new note when he predicted that he (the Messiah?) would have to go up to Jerusalem and suffer.

Was Jesus the Messiah? Montefiore says that the biggest problem of the gospel story is, "In what sense did Jesus believe himself...to be the Messiah?"¹³ Jesus did believe himself to be the Messiah, so say all the Jews (Geiger, Graetz, Montefiore, Klausner, Jocz). Just why the Jews contend that he was not the Messiah has not been adequately stated by the Jewish authors we have been reading. We can say however, that the chief argument against Jesus' Messiahship depends upon the fact that the Messiah and the Messianic Age were inseparable. Since the age

12. Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, 256.

13. C. G. Montefiore, op. cit., I, cxxii.

of prosperity and peace is not yet here, they conclude that the Messiah has not yet come. To this writer, the Jew is fully justified in holding that position, for Jesus did not adequately represent (fulfil) the hoped for Jewish Messiah. For the Jew to accept Jesus as Messiah he must be willing to recognize the validity of Jesus' reshaping of the Messianic role so that the Messiah was the servant of all rather than their king, suffered and died, and established a spiritual kingdom.

In present Judaism faith in a personal Messiah is not a fundamental tenet.¹⁴ Jocz says this is partly due to a desire to resist the prominence of the Messiah in Christianity. A second reason is that the idea of a Messiah having complete authority comes into conflict with the divine Torah. The centrality of the Torah in Jewish life has forced the Messiah into the background to a seat that is only near to Moses.

Jocz has a useful discussion in which he outlines the differences between the Jewish and Christian views. (1) The Rabbis were acquainted with the thought of sacrificing one's life but the idea of vicarious suffering on the part of the Messiah was unknown to them. (2) Those allusions to a suffering Messiah that exist have a nationalistic coloring. (3) The Messianic kingdom of the future is essentially this-worldly. "It is a kingdom within history and time and is ultimately superseded by the final end."

14. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 281.

15. Ibid ., 285.

The Christian faith however,

is founded upon the belief in a vicarious suffering of the Messiah; this suffering benefits all nations; the Messianic kingdom, though conceived to take place upon earth, is not totally of this world; it brings history to an abrupt conclusion and starts a New Order. But there is a further point of even greater importance. In Christian faith the Messiah occupies a central position. He commands obedience, he makes claims upon loyalty, he forgives sin, he mediates between man and God, he redeems men, he renews their spirit, he reveals God and His love. And furthermore, this Messiah is identified with a historical person whose name is Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁵

Liberal or reform Judaism has abandoned the idea of a personal Messiah. For them the emphasis has changed from person to time. They are more interested in the days of the Messiah than in the Messiah himself. They look forward to a Messianic Age in which man will need no Messiah. Indeed the kingdom will be gained through the labors of man himself. Therefore Israel herself becomes the Messiah. Kohler summarizes the liberal position as: "Deutero-Isaiah stated it for all time, Israel, the Servant of God, the Messiah of the nations, working amid woe and suffering", will ultimately bring "the divine kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth."

2. JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

Was Jesus the Son of God? "No", is the emphatic answer of all the Jews. They maintain that the doctrine that he was such was a belief that developed among his followers after his death and resurrection. "Jesus never regarded himself as God."¹⁷ To Jesus' statement, "There is

15. Ibid., 285.

16. Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church, (New York, 1929), 144, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 286.

17. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 377.

none good but God alone," Buber asserts, "no theological interpretation can weaken the directness of this statement."¹⁸ Jewish authorities cite certain passages in the Gospels which tend to reject any claim of divinity for Jesus. In Matthew 24:36 Jesus says that not even the angels in heaven know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, only the Father knows. Therefore, says Klausner, he and the Father are not equal in knowledge. At Gethsemane he prays to the Father that the cup may pass from him and on the cross he utters the cry of dereliction, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In Klausner's view "...it is perfectly manifest that in no sense did he look upon himself as God. Like every Pharisaic Jew he believed in the unity of God, and he turned to God in time of trouble."¹⁹

Yet if Jesus did not regard himself as God how was it that the prince of the apostles once declared: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."? Klausner affirms that the belief in Jesus' divinity arose out of his "exaggerated sense of nearness to God."²⁰ He used the terms "Father," and "my Father" more often than the Pharisees and Tannaim, often with too much emphasis. Because he thought himself Messiah, he was near to the Godhead. This acute awareness of proximity to God was dangerous, for it suggested that there was one man with whom God was especially intimate. In this nearness lay the seed for a claim to divinity. Klausner's argument would be unnecessary if the following words of Cadbury were true, which is improbable, "...that Jesus knew God more intimately than other men is not supported by the gospel evidence."²¹

19. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 377.

20. Ibid., 378.

21. Henry J. Cadbury, The Peril of Modernizing Jesus, (Macmillan Co., New York, 1937), 189.

Mark's account of Jesus' baptism is of primary interest in any discussion of Jesus' sonship and divinity. Mark reports that a voice from the heavens said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Montefiore's commentary on this passage in his Synoptic Gospels suggests that Mark believed that Jesus became the Son of God at baptism (Luke and Matthew assert the same for the event of his birth). However, in Montefiore's view, Sonship for Mark did not mean that Jesus became an integral part of deity. Jesus was "more than a 'mere' man, but he was also distinct from, and subordinate to, God..!"²² Montefiore's suggestion that Jesus was more than man yet not God but occupied some intermediate place, "perhaps in the sense of a heavenly being, of divine nature, though distinct from, and subordinate to God"²³, (this view is convenient, indeed too convenient. For the Christian it says too little, for all but a few very liberal Jews, it says much too much.

Montefiore in an earlier discussion in his book, proposes two possibilities in relating the two aspects of Jesus, his Messiahship and his Sonship. The first possibility is that Jesus through coming to the conviction of his Messiahship may have come to feel that he was nearer and more like God than other men. After all, in spite of Steinberg²⁴, some thinking had existed in which the Messiah was "a semi-divine being, pre-existent..."²⁵ The other possibility Montefiore makes is that he was a son of his Father more than any other man and thus he was led to a conviction of being God's anointed, the Messiah.²⁵

22. C. G. Montefiore, I, 11.

23. Ibid., I, 6.

24. Milton Steinberg, Basic Judaism, (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1947), 169.

25. C. G. Montefiore, op. cit., I, cxxviii.

Nearly always, an estimate about Jesus must be stated only tentatively, because of the nature of the literary documents we possess. The gospel writers believed in a risen Messiah. Their historical-biographical accounts of his life inevitably reflect that conviction. In some manner the disciples of Jesus began to believe that the death of Jesus was different from that of other men. The belief arose that he had risen. This proved his Messiahship and his uniqueness. From this conviction it was not difficult, points out Montefiore, for them to reinterpret every teaching, event and attitude of his life. Fresh miracles were invented. In their minds Jesus comes to foretell his own death and resurrection.²⁶ Montefiore's note of caution, though perhaps too extremely stated, points up the need for scholars to strive to maintain the highest principles of scholarship in studying the gospels and other religious documents. For Christians, and Jews also, and others, tend to think only within the limits set by preconceived patterns of dogma.

Whatever the gospels say or do not say it is not their witness that is the major stumbling block in the way of Jewish' acceptance of Jesus' unique Sonship. The basis for rejection lies in the very core of Judaism itself. It is the absolute monotheism of Judaism that precludes any acceptance of divinity to Jesus or any man. The Jewish doctrine of the unity of God has been admirably described by George Foot Moore as "the numerically exclusive and uncompromisingly personal monotheism."²⁷

26. Ibid., I, cxxvii.

27. George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1927), I, 364.

It is at this point, the unity of God,

that the gulf between the Church and the Synagogue opens before us in all its depth and significance. On this issue, Judaism has never faltered...Dr. J.H. Hertz, an orthodox Jew, and Kaufmann Kohler, a liberal, unequivocally say the same thing. The teaching of the divinity of Christ is an unpardonable offence in the eyes of Judaism.²⁸

Judaism, says Jocz, cannot even admit the position that Jesus was unique among men. This would put him somewhere above the place of humanity. "It is for this reason that Judaism can admit neither the authority, the uniqueness, nor the perfection of Jesus. It consequently rejects even the Unitarian point of view."²⁹ Jocz is substantially sound in his evaluation of the Jewish point of view, though it can be seen that the position of such men as Montefiore and perhaps even Klausner, would not be quite so strict.

3. JESUS, THE SAVIOUR

Christians believe that through the sufferings and death of Jesus God has paid for the sins of men and men by believing in the atoning efficacy of that act are freed from the power of sin and are given strength to live righteously unto God. To the Jews this Jesus who died to save mankind is a Jesus that Judaism has no place for in her theology. Jesus the Savior is categorically rejected by all Jews.

The breach between the Synagogue and the Church on this matter is a result primarily of their respective positions about man and man's sin. To Judaism man is made in the imago dei. The fall of man is a

28. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 265.

29. Ibid., 266.

Christian emphasis that is foreign to Judaism. Judaism is convinced of the innate goodness of man. Men sin, they trespass, but this^{is}/not due to any fundamental defect, badness, or Sin. Man sins, but is not sinful. Judaism then is optimistic about human nature. "Judaism is built upon the assumption of man's unlimited resources to attain to the highest."³⁰ The fundamental tenet of their theology about man is that man is able.

Man is able and therefore there is little need for God to help man to attain righteousness. Through repentance and good works man works out his own salvation. Judaism's theology is anthropocentric.³¹

A second problem is that of the place of a mediator in Judaism. In Old Testament times there was a significant emphasis upon the place of mediation between God and man. The prophets, the priests, and the angels, each had their role in bridging the gulf that separated man from God. According to Jocz, Judaism gradually departed from that doctrine. How then, without a mediator, does sinful man approach God? First, he finds "the loftiest and surest standard of rectitude."³² The second step is conveyed in the promise, "we will do and obey."³³ Man is able to communicate with God through the Holy Spirit for "the Holy Spirit belongs as much to man as to God."³⁴ As Zeigler has stated: "What need have I of a God-Man when I myself have God within me?"³⁵

30. Ibid., 270.

31. Ibid., 272.

32. I. M. Wise, Judaism and Christianity, (Cincinnati, 1883), 68, quoted in Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 280.

33. Ibid., 280.

34. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 280.

35. Ignaz Ziegler, Der Kampf Zwischen Judentum Christentum in den ersten drei Christlichen Jahrhunderten, (Berlin, 1907), 87, quoted in ibid., 281.

Judaism rejects the whole principle of the Incarnation because it implies a need for mediation. Mediation implies the incapacity of man to reach Godwards. Easter for Judaism can only mean defeat, for though it means God's victory, it also means man's defeat.³⁶

For the Jew the Christian view is seen as only pessimistic and negative. Until the Cross man stands condemned. At the Cross his helplessness is met by God's power and strength. Judaism already has this strength, without the Cross.

36. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 281.

CHAPTER V

JESUS' REJECTION-ACCEPTANCE; THE CHURCH

1. HE WAS REJECTED

"Though he (Jesus) was a Jew, his followers were not Jews."¹ Voltaire's famous remark suggests that Jesus was rejected by his own people--a prophet is not without honor except in his own country. John speaks repeatedly of "the Jews" as the principals in the events that led to Jesus' execution. But Peter was a Jew. So were James, Philip, and Barnabas. Was it only some Jews then that disclaimed him?

Jacob Jocz, himself a Christian as well as a Jew, vehemently protests against those who say that Jesus was rejected by the Jews and accepted by the Gentiles. "The truth is that some Jews and some Gentiles have accepted him as their Master and Lord, while many Jews and many Gentiles have remained either indifferent or hostile to the claims which he makes upon men."² Jocz's word is helpful, for both Church and Synagogue have carelessly tended to claim the Gentile race for the one and the Jewish for the other. As Judaism had previously crossed ethnic boundaries by proselytism so Christianity also preached to both Jew and Greek.

Nevertheless it is substantially correct to say that the Jews rejected Jesus. Except for a small group of Jews which grew to sizeable proportions (3,000 added at Pentecost) Christianity became the faith of the Gentiles rather than of the Jews. He came to his own people and his own received him not. Why?

1. Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching, (Macmillan Co., New York, 1925), 9.

2. Jacob Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ (S.P.C.K., LONDON, 1949 and 1954), 4.

The Jews longed for the Messiah. When Jesus began to preach many thought that the kingdom had begun. But the peace and prosperity of the Messianic hope did not happen. Rome continued to extort her taxes; sickness and want were not banished. Because Jesus did not fulfill the Messianic expectations of his generation it did not believe in him.

Jesus offended people by the extreme demands of his ethical teaching. There was a duality in his teaching. He both attracted people and offended them. His yoke was easy and his burden light but there is another aspect of his teaching, his way was one of self-denial. The road to salvation lay through a "strait gate" and men were to leave family behind to take the plough without looking back. As Jocz and Klausner both say, this extremeness in Jesus' teaching could never have been popular and it was not.

A second offence to the people was his unique emphasis upon himself. His "but I say unto you" and his free interpretations of the Law offended not only the Pharisees but also the common people. Who was this man to speak thus to the people of Moses? So John once records that "from that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him."³

Jesus' influence aroused the envy and fear of the authorities. Popular leaders were a possible menace to the security of the Romans and the Sadducees and, in the case of Jesus, to the religious leaders, the Pharisees. No doubt it was as a threat to their own positions that the Jewish leaders decided Jesus must be put out of the way.

Some Jewish writers today might say that the Jews turned from Jesus because he had nothing new to say. In this writer's opinion this is a result of reading the judgments of today's scholarship into those of the first-century audience. We have dealt earlier with the new elements present in Jesus' teaching. They were impressed by his personality and note of authority. Billy Graham says little that is new yet he attracts thousands through his great conviction and his compelling personality.

Jesus' teachings inevitably meant the eventual submergence of the Jewish state and Jewish identity in the world brotherhood. Christians refused to fight in the rebellion of 66-70. This neglect of the duties of citizenship the Jews could not accept. To be a Jew, one of the chosen, was right and not meant to be rejected for any commonwealth of peoples. The Jews could not support a leader whose teachings neglected the national hope. Though Christianity began with this world outlook, so offensive to the Jewish mind, it came to be identified with the state and exists today as the religion of the West as Judaism is the religion of the Jew.

2. BUT SOME BELIEVED...

Had the response to Jesus been one of rejection only this writer would not now be writing this paper, or any paper upon Christianity. But some believed.

Klausner has a memorable paragraph in which he pays tribute to the great impression Jesus made upon his day:

The influence of Jesus upon his disciples and followers was exceptional. In Galilee masses of people followed him: for his sake his disciples forsook all and followed him to the danger zone, to Jerusalem; they remained faithful to him both during his life and after his terrible death. Every word he spoke--even parables which they did not understand and the more enigmatic figures of speech--they treasured like a precious pearl. As time went on his spiritual image grew more and more exalted till, at length, it reached the measure of the divine. Never has such a thing happened to any other human creature in enlightened, historic times and among a people claiming a two thousand years old civilization.⁴

Why did some believe in Jesus? Jesus was a man of the people. He sought out the sick and the lost. His mission was to preach to the poor; he ate with publicans and sinners. This identification with ordinary people made him popular among them.

Klausner has a major chapter⁵ in which he asserts that the secret of Jesus' influence was due to two things: "the complex nature of his personality and his methods of teaching." In Klausner's opinion it was the combination of Jesus' defects as well as his virtues, that is, his contradictions, that compelled astonishment and admiration. On the one hand he was humble, tender, and tolerant, while on the other hand, he possessed a belief in his mission which verged on the extreme of self-veneration. He is at once "one of the people", a Galilean artisan, and at the same time, he is not illiterate but an expert in the scriptures, a "Rab". He is gentleness and charm on the one side but makes the extremest moral demands on the other.

4. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 408.

5. Ibid., 408-413.

Finally, Jesus is on the one hand "a man of the world, to a great extent he has a sense of realities." On the other hand, he shows himself an "unworldly visionary." He considers himself the Messiah and performs miracles. If he had been only the one or the other, either the realist or the visionary, his influence would have been temporary. "Only where mystic faith is yoked with practical prudence does there follow a strong, enduring result." Such, in Klausner's view, is the secret of Jesus' influence. These contradictory traits combined "to make him a force and an influence, for which history has never yet afforded a parallel."

His method of teaching was of similar effect. In Klausner's estimate Jesus was a "great artist in parable" and the inventor of "striking" proverbs. These are his and not his disciples' for almost all are "shaped with the seal of one great, single personality, the seal of Jesus..." Jesus was able to grasp the innermost principle and then to voice it in a shrewd proverb. This device of teaching plus his complex personality made it possible for his teaching never to be forgotten.

To the Christian, the secret of Jesus' influence will always be, in large part, a secret. At a word from his lips men forsook their businesses to follow him. Such attraction is more than man has known and more than he can ever understand. Christians would explain Jesus' great influence in terms of his divinity and his complete dedication to God. The Jews refer rather to his concern for others, his attractive personality, and his methods of teaching in parable and proverb.

3. THE BREACH BETWEEN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE

"He is the only mortal of whom one can say without exaggeration that his death was more effective than his life. Golgotha, the place of skulls, became a new Sinai."⁶ Christianity did not die. The amazing news of the triumph of the Messiah spread quickly so that one day three thousand souls were added and on another five thousand.

The first Christians may more properly be called Nazarenes. They were a "conventicle"⁷ within the synagogue. Their peculiarity was that they believed the Messiah had come in the man Jesus who had appeared in the time of Tiberias and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Outside of this they were pious and observant Jews. In doctrine and practice they were fully part of the religious scene of the day. As Kohler said "the early church distinguished itself little from the Synagogue. Its members, who are called Judaeo-Christians, continued to observe the Jewish Law, and changed their attitude to it only gradually."⁸ According to Klausner, Christianity in these early days was "nothing more than an adjunct to Pharisaic-Essenic Judaism."⁹ To what extent the belief in Jesus as Messiah aroused antagonism and division between the Nazarenes and the Synagogue is difficult to ascertain. Certainly the extreme view of Graetz cannot be accepted: "the picture of Jesus nailed to the cross, crowned with thorns, the blood streaming from his wounds, was ever present to his followers,

6. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, (Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1893), II, 166.

7. George Foot Moore, Judaism, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1927), I, 90.

8. Kaufmann Kohler, Jewish Theology, (New York, 1918), 427, quoted by Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 157.

9. Joseph Klausner, From Jesus to Paul, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1943), 297.

filling their hearts with bitter thoughts of revenge."¹⁰ There is nothing in the whole New Testament literature to justify such a view.

Yet the Nazarenes were not to continue unmolested. There was persecution. In Klausner's view the Nazarene community remained relatively free from persecution during the period between the crucifixion and the destruction of the Temple (30-70). Only three serious persecutions were recorded: the stoning of Stephen, the execution of James the son of Zebedee, and the stoning of James the brother of Jesus. Klausner says that these were all for infractions of the Law. One of the reasons for the rapid rise of Christianity was that the Pharisees tolerated it and thought of it as just another Jewish sect, while only the Sadducees opposed it.¹¹ Some have said that Jewish Christianity was tolerated but that the Hellenistic branch represented by Stephen was liable to persecution. Jocz is unwilling to accept this. In his view "there was no fundamental difference of view between him (Stephen) and the rest of the disciples."¹² Furthermore, the early Christian situation was not as peaceful as Klausner would lead us to believe asserts Jocz. There was early conflict with Judaism. This conflict revolved round the maintaining of the Law and the Messiah. Either the Messianic Age had come and the Law had been fulfilled, or the Law was still pointing to him, in which case the Messiah had not yet come. Jewish scholars usually move the occurrence of persecution to the later period when Paul's influence began to arouse antagonism. Conflict was earlier than that, says Jocz. The Jews rejected Jesus before they rejected Paul.

10. Heinrich Graetz, op. cit., II, 171f.

11. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 349.

12. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 156.

In the opinion of Shirley Jackson Case¹³ one of the factors that caused divisions between the Church and the Synagogue was the activities of the Spirit. The Church experienced God's Spirit at Pentecost, at baptism, in mighty works, and in speaking with tongues, so that by their possession of pneumatic activity the Nazarenes were further distinguished from others in the Synagogue.

Of necessity the Gentile Church would only be regarded as a rival of the Synagogue. The rift between Jewish Christians and the Synagogue grew more gradually. Of decisive importance in bringing about the final breach were the destruction of the Temple and more, the Bar Cochba insurrection (131-135). In the eyes of the Jewish Christian community who emigrated to Pella the destruction of the Temple was a sign of divine displeasure with the nation which had rejected the Messiah. Prophecies of Jesus were recalled that anticipated the tragic event. Bar Cochba's rebellion brought about the final separation of the Nazarenes from the rest of the Jews. Hailed by the greatest rabbi of the day, Akiba, as Messiah, Bar Cochba was not supported by the Christians. To fight for this Messiah was to deny the Messiah who had come. Their refusal to participate aroused much bitterness. Judaism whose religion had once been the reason for the state now found that the state had become the reason for religion. All resources were exploited for the one end of procuring the survival of the nation. Since Christians stood outside this cause, they stood outside Judaism. The breach was complete.

Subsequent years were to witness the persecution of the minority by the majority, of the Jews by the Christian Church. Church Councils

13. Shirley Jackson Case, The Evolution of Early Christianity, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1914), 128.

in the early fourth century passed laws forbidding and limiting Christian association with Jews. The struggle which was first a spiritual struggle between two manifestations of Israel took up less seemly weapons. Being the stronger it was the Church which erred most in this. To talk of a rapprochement between the two parties now is to 'idly dream for "between Jesus and the Jews stands the Christian church."14

By history's usual patterns the death of Jesus should have been the death knell to his small group of followers. For a short time after the execution this seems to have happened but subsequent events began to bring an increase in numbers with a considerable vitality within the group. The group spread out from Jerusalem to other areas of Judea and was soon proselytizing in Asia Minor and even Europe. What were the factors that worked for the success of the early church?

Jocz mentions four.¹⁵ Firstly, the political unrest of the day created a receptivity for new spiritual values. Secondly, some joined for the political associations that Messianic preaching always suggested. Thirdly, there was the prestige of the man Jesus and his winning personality. Fourthly, following the example of their Master the early leaders paid special attention to the poor and needy. Thus "the people" were won for the Messiah.

Klausner's work on Paul has two hundred pages in which he strives to show, through an analysis of the conditions of the day, that there were certain factors which made possible the phenomenal growth of the church: "first, the dispersion of the Jews outside of Palestine; second, the spiritual conditions among the Gentiles at that time; and third, the

14. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 96.

15. Ibid., 163-164.

Hellenistic Jewish culture of the non-Palestinian Jews in those days."¹⁶ Among the Jews of the Diaspora there was a condition of "rootlessness". This because they were in business and not tillers of the soil. In this economic restlessness it was easy for them to pass from Judaism to Pauline Christianity. Further, an assimilation of Greek thinking, Greek names, and a diluting of the ceremonial observances, produced a half-assimilated people who were more ready than the Palestinian Jews to accept the teaching of Paul. Similar conditions existed among the proselytes who had not fully given up their paganism and often found the requirements of Moses difficult. Paul's baptism into belief in a Messiah was considerably more attractive than the rite of circumcision and the complex ceremonial observances.

At the time the spiritual conditions of the Gentiles were conducive to the new faith. There was widespread moral degeneration yet a desire among some for better things. The philosophical thought of the Stoics and the Epicureans and the general syncretistic character of the pagan religions made the new faith welcome.

Klausner discusses finally, the third factor, the Hellenistic Jewish thought of the day. The Wisdom of Solomon, Fourth Maccabees, The Sibylline Oracles, and the writings of Philo, all these had elements conducive to the acceptance of the preaching of the Hellenistic Jew, Paul.

Paul was stoned, whipped and suffered many times at the hands of opposition elements but always "some believed." The church grew and flourished and was soon known in every part of the Empire.

16. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 6.

4. PAUL

The Jews blame Paul for Christianity. "...it was not Jesus who created (or more correctly, founded) Christianity, but Paul. Jesus is the source and root of Christianity, its religious ideal, and he became all unconsciously its lawgiving prophet."¹⁷ With few exceptions, Jewish scholars make Paul solely responsible for the creation of the Christian Church. He is for some the "perverter of the gospel," for others he is an "intellectual giant,"¹⁸ and "a religious genius of the first order."¹⁹

If Judaism has a quarrel with the Church's founders it is with Paul rather than with Jesus. Jesus is universally admired and perhaps revered. Not so Paul. "Because of Paul," said Rabbi Dr. Louis Sacks, "the religion about Jesus is not Jewish but Christian. Christianity is the product not of Jesus but of Paul." The Rabbi gave a lecture entitled Jesus in the Hebraic Tradition. He outlined several emphases of Pauline theology that Judaism rejects: Jesus' messiahship, Jesus as Son of God, vicarious atonement, the resurrection, and mediatorship. Judaism rejects these as inconsistent with Judaism and indeed as unwarranted extensions of the thought of Jesus.

In his Paul and Rabbinic Judaism Davies begins by examining a position put forth by Montefiore in Judaism and St. Paul. Montefiore had argued that Paul was not of the mainstream of first-century Judaism. He was a Jew of the Diaspora, unacquainted with the best Rabbinic Judaism of Palestine. Davies discusses Montefiore's view and then discards it.

17. Ibid., 581.

18. H. G. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, (Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1931), 159.

19. C. G. Montefiore, "Rabbinic Judaism and St. Paul," Jewish Quarterly Review, (January, 1901), quoted in Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 131.

Such elements in Paul as dissatisfaction with the Law, transcendentalism, pessimism, and mysticism, which Montefiore thinks must come from Hellenistic influences may well emanate from Pharisaic Judaism itself concludes Davies.

Professor Klausner's work From Jesus to Paul "sums up the most authoritative view"²⁰ on the problem of the relationship between Jesus and Paul. Klausner says of Paul:

He consciously opposed paganism and brought over the pagans to Judaism in the new Christian form which he had created; but he was unconsciously influenced by paganism and took over from it most of its sacred practices (sacraments) insofar as he could find for them a precedent in Judaism; or, he unintentionally colored Jewish customs with a pagan-mystery color.²¹

But with all this, Klausner, contrary to many Jewish scholars, recognizes Paul's important connections with Judaism. He sees no reason to doubt Paul's assertion that he had been a Pharisee, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews", and had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Yet in spite of this, "Paul was not a Jew in the modern sense."²² His soul was torn between Palestinian Pharisaism and Jewish Hellenism. He was never completely at home in either the first religion or the second. Klausner makes a significant conclusion about the source of Paul's thinking: "Intensive research over many years has brought the writer of the present book to a deep conviction that there is nothing in the teaching of Paul--not even the most mystical elements in it--that did not come to him from authentic Judaism."²³ As Jocz has said, the acknowledgment of the Jewishness of Paul by so important a scholar as Klausner is a new departure in Judaism.

20. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 132.

21. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 118.

22. Jacob Jocz, op. cit., 132.

23. Joseph Klausner, op. cit., 466.

In the development of Christianity Paul's role is central. The Jewish point of view is essentially embodied in the following paragraph of Klausner: "Thus it can be said with finality:

without Jesus no Paul and no Nazarenes; but without Paul no world Christianity. And in this sense, Jesus was not the founder of Christianity as it was spread among the Gentiles, but Paul "the apostle of the Gentiles," in spite of the fact that Paul based himself on Jesus, and in spite of all that Paul received from the primitive church in Jerusalem.²⁴

Bultmann states a similar view in less simple terms. His view, that of a Christian, is more appreciative of Paul than is Klausner's.

Standing within the frame of Hellenistic Christianity he (Paul) raised the theological motifs that were at work in the proclamation of the Hellenistic Church to the clarity of theological thinking: he called to attention the problems latent in the Hellenistic proclamation and brought them to a decision; and thus--so far as our sources permit an opinion on the matter--became the founder of Christian theology.²⁵

24. Ibid., 590.

25. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, (SCM Press, London, 1952), 187.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

What is Jesus to the Jews? Judaism has no official position regarding Jesus. Yet, whether ancient or modern, orthodox or reform, the Jews hold, with near-unanimity, certain views about Jesus. First of all, Jesus cannot be an object of worship. To admit this would be to deny the foundation stone of Judaism, the unity of God (for a Jew to impute divinity to Jesus would make him a believer, no longer a Jew, but a Christian). Neither is Jesus the Messiah. The Messianic age was not fulfilled in Jesus. The coming of the Messiah is still a future hope. He was not a prophet. He was not the founder of a new religion.

Jesus was a great ethical teacher. The Jews acknowledge him as the great example of the ethical life. They agree that his teaching and his life of moral earnestness and love is unparalleled in the annals of man.

Since the New Testament is the basis of Western civilization there are many among the Jews who have begun to study it in earnest. It will never displace the Bible (Old Testament) for them but it may become a worthy supplement. They consider that the worth of the New Testament, and especially of the gospels, is in the teaching that is there, the ethical teaching. It is as the "Book of the Ethics of Jesus" that they read the New Testament gospels. For them the Sermon on the Mount is great and enduring apart from the teacher and requires no particular veneration of him to be appreciated.

It is admitted that from a Christian point of view this dissertation has been somewhat negative. Christians are more desirous of

exalting the founder of the faith than of criticizing him as do the Jews. What should now be said from a Christian point of view? As Christians we can be grateful for Jewish scholarship that is helping to paint the portrait of the historic Jesus. Without the Jesus of history the Faith may become founded upon myth, legend, and even, fabrication.

The views of Jewish skepticism are not new in the Church. Heretics and saints have variously held that Jesus was not divine, that he was not Messiah, that the gospels are questionable sources. But Christianity does not stop at these points as does Judaism. The Christian's faith is founded on the belief that God was in the man Jesus in a unique way. As God was in Isaiah so he was in Jesus but more so, or more probably, in a different way.

Christians are not optimistic about human nature. The Jew says man is able. The Christian says man is not able. Since the beginning of time man has needed salvation. In the God-man, Jesus, man has been and is saved, freed from himself, and now able to live unto God.

Jesus was the Messiah. Though he was not a slavish fulfillment of the Jewish Messianic expectations, Christians believe that through him God was establishing his Reign.

Finally, in which institution does the hope for mankind lie: the Synagogue or the Church? Is it only a statement of prejudice to affirm that viewed side by side it is the Church rather than the Synagogue that has made the most significant contribution to mankind? It is the Church that comes nearest to living out what we believe to be God's will, the winning of all mankind to Him. It is the Church that offers to every

man a living religion of coming into relationship with a Person (Christ) who daily associates with the believer. Does not the Synagogue still tend to regulate religious life by rule and principle?

I close with the hope that it may yet be that the countrymen of the Galilean may come to believe, as I believe: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

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